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Cohesion in the Mapalus Rumah Culture as a Model for Women's Empowerment Management

Treesje Imran¹, Erna Ngala², Patricia Jeaneth Cyntia Kojongian³, Jemmy Sondakh⁴

^{1,2} STIE Pioner Manado, Indonesia

³ Universitas Trinita Manado, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Sam Ratulangi Manado, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The increasingly humanistic development of Human Resource Management (HRM) requires the integration of social and cultural values into organizational practices. However, local culture is often perceived as limiting women's participation and gender equality. This study aims to analyze cohesion within the Mapalus Rumah culture and explore its potential as a local wisdom-based model for women's empowerment in HRM. The novelty of this study lies in positioning Mapalus Rumah culture as a culturally grounded HRM model that integrates women's participation, social cohesion, and collective empowerment into modern organizational management. This research employed a qualitative approach with an exploratory descriptive design. Sixteen informants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of 12 women actively involved in Mapalus Rumah activities and 4 supporting informants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman with triangulation to ensure validity. The findings show that cohesion in Mapalus Rumah culture is built through continuous social interaction, mutual trust, open communication, and collective commitment. Women play strategic roles as initiators, decision-makers, and social agents within the community. Strong patterns of emotional support, solidarity, and resource exchange among women also contribute to strengthening individual capacity and collective social resilience. These findings indicate that local culture can function as an inclusive space that adapts to local social and cultural contexts while still promoting equal participation and opportunities for women. This study concludes that Mapalus Rumah culture has strong potential as a culturally based management model relevant to modern organizations. The integration of cohesion, participation, solidarity, and community-based support into HRM practices can serve as an effective and sustainable strategy for women's empowerment, employee engagement, and socially adaptive organizational development in the modernization era.

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Corresponding Author:

Treesje Imran

Program Studi Manajemen, STIE Pioner Manado, Indonesia

Email: treisimran1972@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of Human Resource Management (HRM) over the past few decades has demonstrated a significant shift in paradigm. Previously, HRM primarily emphasized administrative functions, workforce control, and operational efficiency. However, this approach has evolved toward a more strategic and human-centered orientation. Human resources are no longer viewed merely as factors of production, but rather as the organization's most valuable assets, possessing potential, intrinsic value, and the capacity to innovate and adapt [1], [2]. This perspective requires organizations not only to manage individuals from a technical standpoint but also to understand the social, cultural, and psychological contexts that shape work behavior. Consequently, effective HRM practices need to incorporate local values and cultural wisdom as part of a sustainable management strategy [3], [4].

In the context of Indonesian society, which is rich in cultural diversity, the integration of local values into management practices has become increasingly relevant. Culture functions not only as a collective identity but also as a system of values that shapes patterns of social interaction, including within workplaces and organizations [5], [6]. Nevertheless, local culture is often perceived as rigid and inclined to preserve traditional social structures, particularly in terms of gender relations. This perception does not fully reflect reality, as many local cultural practices actually embody inclusive values that can support women's roles. In several communities, local culture serves as a social space that enables women to actively participate in economic, social, and decision-making activities. This indicates that local culture does not necessarily contradict women's existence; instead, it can act as a medium that strengthens their position in society [7], [8].

One form of local wisdom that is particularly interesting to examine in this context is the Mapalus Rumah tradition. This cultural practice represents a form of mutual cooperation deeply rooted in community life, emphasizing principles of togetherness, solidarity, and mutual assistance. In practice, Mapalus Rumah involves not only men but also women as integral members of the community. Women actively participate in various activities, ranging from planning to implementation, demonstrating relatively open opportunities for participation. Such interaction patterns suggest that local culture can function as a social mechanism that collectively supports women's empowerment. In other words, the existence of Mapalus Rumah reflects how traditional values can align with empowerment efforts when understood and applied contextually.

Beyond providing participation opportunities, collective practices such as Mapalus Rumah also reveal supportive dynamics among women. In everyday interactions, women not only fulfill functional roles but also build social relationships grounded in trust, empathy, and solidarity [9], [10], [11]. These relationships create an environment that facilitates the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and emotional support. In many cases, women's social networks become a crucial factor in enhancing self-confidence, social resilience, and adaptability in facing various challenges. Therefore, the cohesiveness formed within women's groups should not be seen as a simple phenomenon, but rather as a social force with strategic implications for empowerment processes [12], [13], [14].

Furthermore, the concept of gender equality is an essential issue that cannot be separated from discussions of women's empowerment. Gender equality is not merely about granting equal rights; it also encompasses fairness in access to resources, opportunities for participation, and the ability to benefit from various social and economic activities. Although numerous policies and programs have been designed to promote gender equality, their implementation often encounters challenges, particularly in societies still influenced by traditional norms. In such contexts, a culture-based approach can serve as a more effective alternative, as it bridges traditional values with modern principles. The Mapalus Rumah tradition, with its collective and participatory characteristics, has the potential to become an inclusive space where women can engage equally without abandoning their cultural identity [15], [16], [17].

Alongside the increasingly intense processes of modernization and globalization, organizations are required to continuously adapt to dynamic environmental changes. Digital transformation, shifting work patterns, and increasing organizational complexity demand management models that are not only efficient but also flexible and human-oriented. In this regard, integrating local culture into management practices has begun to gain attention as a viable approach [18], [19]. Culture-based management offers a distinct perspective by emphasizing values of togetherness, participation, and sustainability. This approach is not only relevant for community-based organizations but can also be adopted by modern organizations as a strategy to enhance team cohesiveness, strengthen organizational identity, and foster inclusive work environments [20], [21].

From a managerial perspective, the Mapalus Rumah tradition holds significant potential to be developed as an organizational management model grounded in local values. The principles of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and collective responsibility embedded in this tradition are closely aligned with the concepts of teamwork, participation, and employee engagement in modern Human Resource Management (HRM). In addition, the strong cohesiveness formed within Mapalus Rumah practices contributes to strengthening commitment, trust, and collective effectiveness among community members, particularly women.

Although previous studies have widely discussed women's empowerment, social cohesion, and local culture separately, limited research has specifically examined how local cultural cohesion can be integrated into a culturally grounded HRM model for women's empowerment. This gap indicates the need for a more contextual approach that connects local wisdom, gender participation, and modern managerial practices within a single analytical framework.

The novelty of this study lies in positioning the cohesiveness of Mapalus Rumah culture as a local wisdom-based management model that integrates social solidarity, women's participation, and collective empowerment into contemporary HRM practices. This study argues that local culture should not merely be viewed as a social tradition, but also as a strategic managerial resource capable of supporting inclusive and sustainable organizational development. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the formation of cohesiveness within the Mapalus Rumah tradition and to examine its potential as a culturally grounded model for managing women's empowerment in the context of modern HRM.

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2. **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-exploratory design to gain an in-depth understanding of cohesiveness within the Mapalus Rumah cultural tradition and its relevance as a model for women's empowerment management. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to explore meanings, values, and social interactions embedded in local cultural practices that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. Through this approach, the study sought to understand how women interpret their participation in Mapalus Rumah activities and how social relationships within the tradition contribute to cohesion and empowerment processes.

The research was conducted in a community in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, where the Mapalus Rumah tradition continues to be actively practiced as part of everyday social and cultural life. The community was selected purposively because of the sustainability of the tradition, the strong communal values maintained by local residents, and the active involvement of women in collective activities. Socio-culturally, the community is characterized by close kinship relations, mutual cooperation, and strong solidarity among members, making it a relevant setting for examining cohesion and women's empowerment based on local wisdom. The study was carried out over approximately three months, including preparation, fieldwork, data analysis, and report writing. During the research process, the researcher sought to establish rapport and trust with participants to obtain more authentic and contextually grounded data.

Participants were selected purposively and consisted of 12 primary informants, namely women who had actively participated in Mapalus Rumah activities for at least one year. In addition, four supporting informants were included, consisting of community leaders, the head of the Mapalus group, and male community members familiar with the tradition, bringing the total number of informants to 16. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, where no substantial new information emerged from additional interviews.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview protocol containing guiding questions related to group cohesion, women's participation, decision-making roles, forms of social support, and cultural values underlying the Mapalus Rumah tradition. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was conducted in a flexible manner to allow participants to share their experiences and perspectives openly. Interviews were recorded with participants' permission and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Participant observation was conducted by directly attending and engaging in several Mapalus Rumah activities. During the observation process, the researcher documented patterns of interaction, communication styles, collaborative practices, women's participation, and forms of collective decision-making occurring within the group. Field notes were written systematically after each observation session to capture contextual details and emerging reflections. Documentation data, such as photographs of activities, community records, and relevant local documents, were also used to support and strengthen the findings.

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. After transcription, the data were coded through an open coding process to identify meaningful statements related to cohesion, solidarity, participation, empowerment, and social support. Similar codes were then grouped into broader categories through axial coding, which enabled the identification of relationships among concepts. Finally, selective coding was carried out to develop major themes that represented the core findings of the study, such as collective commitment, women's leadership roles, emotional solidarity, and culturally grounded empowerment practices. The themes were continuously reviewed and refined throughout the analytical process to ensure consistency with the empirical data.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different categories of informants, while technique triangulation involved integrating findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also carried out by confirming interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations with participants to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations. In addition, theoretical references were used to strengthen analytical interpretation and support the credibility of the findings.

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the objectives of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the research at any stage without consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews and observations were conducted. To protect confidentiality and privacy, participants' names and personal identities were anonymized in transcripts and research reports, and all collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

Overall, the research procedure was conducted systematically through interconnected stages, beginning with a literature review and instrument preparation, followed by field data collection, simultaneous data analysis, validation of findings, and report writing. Through these procedures, the study is expected to provide analytical contributions to the development of culturally grounded management models, particularly in the context of women's empowerment and Human Resource Management in the era of modernization.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings obtained through a series of data collection processes, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation conducted throughout the study. These three techniques were employed in an integrated manner to generate comprehensive data capable of accurately representing social reality. In-depth interviews provided space for participants to express their experiences and perspectives more openly, while participant observation enabled the researcher to directly understand the dynamics of interactions occurring within the practice of Mapalus Rumah culture. Documentation served as supporting evidence that strengthened

the field findings, ensuring that the overall data obtained achieved a level of validity that can be accounted for.

The findings of the study focus on three main aspects: cohesion within the Mapalus Rumah cultural practice, the roles and participation of women in this cultural context, and the patterns of social support established among members. These aspects are analyzed to examine how the social relationships formed contribute to supporting the process of women's empowerment within a local cultural framework. Furthermore, the findings are not only presented descriptively but are also analyzed more deeply by linking them to perspectives of human resource management, local cultural values, and gender equality concepts. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relevance of Mapalus Rumah culture as an alternative model for organizational development and women's empowerment in the modern era.

3.1. Results

Group Cohesion in the Mapalus Rumah Cultural Practice

The findings indicate that group cohesion within the Mapalus Rumah cultural practice is formed through a natural and continuous social process. This cohesion does not emerge instantly; rather, it develops from ongoing interactions among community members, particularly women, across various collective activities. Field data reveal that the bonds among members are not merely driven by temporary interests, but by a shared awareness of the importance of mutual support in social life. This is reflected in how members interact, collaborate, and maintain harmonious relationships over time.

In-depth interviews with participants further illustrate that cohesion in the Mapalus Rumah group is characterized by a strong sense of belonging. Most informants expressed that they do not perceive themselves as separate individuals, but as part of an interconnected social unit. One participant noted that involvement in Mapalus Rumah made her feel "not alone" when facing life's challenges. This statement highlights that the cohesion formed is not only functional in facilitating cooperation, but also deeply rooted in emotional connections.

Moreover, group cohesion is reinforced by a high level of trust among members. This trust develops through repeated shared experiences, such as participating in mutual assistance activities, supporting one another in difficult situations, and sharing responsibilities within the community. Observations show that members do not exhibit suspicion or excessive competition. Instead, they demonstrate openness and mutual respect, creating a supportive social environment that fosters effective collaboration.

Cohesion is also evident in the communication patterns among members. Interactions are open, informal, and not constrained by rigid hierarchical structures. Informants stated that they feel comfortable expressing opinions, offering suggestions, and even providing constructive criticism without fear of conflict. In several instances, spontaneous group discussions were observed, where each member had equal opportunities to contribute. This suggests that cohesion not only strengthens social bonds but also encourages active participation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, group cohesion in Mapalus Rumah is deeply rooted in underlying cultural values, particularly mutual cooperation and togetherness. These values are not only taught normatively but are actively practiced **in daily life. In this context,** culture functions **as a** mechanism that guides members' behavior, ensuring alignment in actions and shared goals. Informants emphasized that participation in Mapalus Rumah is not merely a social obligation, but also an expression of cultural identity that must be preserved. This indicates that group cohesion is supported by a strong normative foundation, enabling its long-term sustainability.

The study also finds that group cohesion has direct implications for the effectiveness of collaboration within the community. In Mapalus Rumah activities, members work in a coordinated manner without the need for strict supervision. Task distribution is flexible and adapted to each individual's capabilities. Observations show that members quickly understand their roles and willingly assist others when needed. This reflects a high level of collective awareness, which is a key indicator of strong group cohesion.

Beyond its functional role, cohesion also carries significant socio-emotional dimensions. Relationships among members extend beyond Mapalus activities into other aspects of life. Informants reported frequently visiting one another outside formal gatherings, sharing personal experiences, and offering support during difficult times. This demonstrates that group cohesion has evolved into a strong social network that provides a sense of security and comfort. In this regard, cohesion serves not only as a means to achieve collective goals but also as an essential source of social support.

Additionally, cohesion contributes to the formation of social norms that encourage collective behavior. These norms develop informally through repeated interactions and are accepted as part of the group's culture. For instance, there are unwritten agreements regarding mutual assistance, maintaining harmony, and avoiding conflicts that could damage social relationships. Informants indicated that violating these norms could affect one's relationship with other members, thereby indirectly encouraging individuals to regulate their attitudes and behavior.

From an empirical perspective, these findings align with observations showing that the Mapalus Rumah group is able to maintain social stability despite various challenges. High cohesion enables the group to remain united when facing differences of opinion or changing circumstances. In some cases, minor conflicts were resolved quickly through open communication and a familial approach. This suggests that cohesion functions not only under normal conditions but also as an adaptive mechanism in responding to social dynamics.

Further evidence supporting this finding is the consistent participation of members in Mapalus Rumah activities. Most informants reported rarely being absent, except under unavoidable circumstances. This high level of attendance reflects a strong commitment to the group, which is another indicator of cohesion. Additionally, members demonstrated high enthusiasm in every activity, as seen in their active involvement and positive attitudes throughout the process.

In conclusion, group cohesion within the Mapalus Rumah cultural practice can be understood as the result of intensive social interactions, deeply embedded cultural values,

and repeated collective experiences. This cohesion not only strengthens relationships among members but also enhances the effectiveness of cooperation and the community's social resilience. These findings affirm the important role of local culture in shaping stable and sustainable social structures, particularly in the context of women's empowerment.

The Role and Participation of Women in Mapalus Rumah

The findings of this study indicate that women occupy not only a significant but also a strategic position within the cultural practice of Mapalus Rumah. Their involvement extends beyond merely supportive or domestic roles, encompassing various collective activities, including planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. This suggests that women within the Mapalus Rumah community are not positioned as passive participants; rather, they act as key agents who actively contribute to the group's social dynamics.

Based on interviews with informants, it was revealed that women often serve as primary initiators in organizing Mapalus Rumah activities. They play a role in initiating programs, coordinating members, and ensuring that activities are carried out in accordance with mutual agreements. One informant noted that women possess a strong sense of social awareness, making them more responsive to the needs of community members. This highlights that women's roles are not only technical but also encompass important social and emotional dimensions that sustain the continuity of activities.

Field observations further support these findings, showing that women are actively involved in both physical and non-physical activities. In tasks requiring physical effort, women participate according to their capacity, while in activities involving coordination and communication, they tend to take on more dominant roles. This reflects a flexible division of roles that enables women to contribute optimally without being constrained by rigid gender stereotypes. Consequently, women's participation in Mapalus Rumah occurs naturally and without significant structural barriers.

In addition, women play a crucial role in decision-making processes. Although decisions are not always made formally, they are generally reached through deliberation involving all members, including women. Informants emphasized that women's opinions are respected and considered in determining the direction of activities. In some instances, women even play a decisive role in final decisions, particularly on matters related to social welfare and community well-being. This indicates that the practice of Mapalus Rumah embraces inclusive participation.

Furthermore, women's involvement in Mapalus Rumah has a meaningful impact on enhancing individual capacities. Informants reported that through active participation, they gain valuable experiences that not only broaden their knowledge but also strengthen their social skills. For example, women become more effective in communication, more capable of working collaboratively, and better equipped to manage conflicts constructively. These experiences indirectly contribute to increased self-confidence and independence in their daily lives.

In several cases, the study found that women who are actively engaged in Mapalus Rumah tend to hold stronger social positions within their communities. They are more widely recognized by other members, more frequently involved in important activities, and

have greater influence in shaping group opinions. This condition suggests that participation in collective activities serves as a means for women to strengthen their bargaining position within the social structure. In other words, Mapalus Rumah functions not only as a platform for cooperation but also as a social space that allows women to develop their potential more broadly.

Another notable finding is the presence of informal social learning processes among women. Through intensive interaction, they share experiences, knowledge, and strategies for dealing with various life challenges. This creates an unstructured yet effective mechanism for knowledge transfer that enhances the collective capacity of the group. Informants mentioned that they often learn from one another's experiences, whether related to family management, economic activities, or social relationships. This demonstrates that Mapalus Rumah also serves as a space for social education for women.

On the other hand, women's participation in Mapalus Rumah reflects a balance between domestic and social roles. Although most women continue to fulfill their responsibilities within the household, they are able to allocate time and energy to engage in community activities. Informants stated that participation in Mapalus is not perceived as an additional burden, but rather as an integral part of social life that provides benefits for both themselves and their families. This indicates a harmonious integration between domestic and public roles.

Moreover, the findings show that women's participation in Mapalus Rumah is supported by the surrounding social environment, including family and the broader community. In many cases, husbands and other family members provide support for women's involvement in these activities. This support is a key factor enabling women to participate actively without facing significant obstacles. Therefore, the success of women's participation in Mapalus Rumah is influenced not only by individual factors but also by supportive social conditions.

Overall, the role and participation of women in the Mapalus Rumah culture reflect a shift in gender relations at the community level. Women are no longer viewed as confined to domestic spheres but have become an integral part of productive social activities. Their active participation, involvement in decision-making, and contributions across various activities demonstrate that women possess capacities equal to men in social contexts. Thus, Mapalus Rumah can be understood not only as a tradition that preserves cultural values but also as a social space that accommodates the evolving role of women in modern society.

Patterns of Social Support Among Women

The findings reveal that one of the primary strengths of the Mapalus Rumah cultural practice lies in the pattern of social support developed among women. This support is neither formal nor organizationally structured; rather, it emerges organically through continuous interactions in everyday life. The relationships formed are not solely based on shared activities but are also rooted in emotional closeness and a strong sense of mutual care. Consequently, social support in this context becomes an integral component of group cohesiveness, as previously discussed.

Based on interview results, most informants expressed experiencing a strong emotional bond with other members, which fosters a willingness to help one another without being asked. One informant noted that when a member encounters difficulties whether economic challenges or family-related issues others spontaneously offer assistance according to their respective capacities. This indicates that social support within Mapalus Rumah is not merely reactive but also proactive, as members demonstrate sensitivity toward the conditions of others.

Observational findings further illustrate that this pattern of social support is reflected in various forms of interaction. During Mapalus activities, women not only work together but also pay close attention to each other's well-being. When a member appears tired or faces difficulty, others promptly provide assistance without waiting to be asked. Moreover, outside formal activities such as when a member falls ill or encounters family problems women in the community continue to show concern through visits, material assistance, and emotional encouragement. This demonstrates that the social relationships established are not temporary but sustained and extend beyond group activities.

The social support observed also encompasses strong emotional and psychological dimensions. Informants reported feeling more at ease and confident because they have a space to share experiences and receive support. In many instances, women actively listen to one another, offer advice, and help identify solutions to personal challenges. Such interactions create a safe space where women can express their thoughts and feelings without fear of negative judgment. This condition plays a crucial role in supporting **mental health and overall psychological well-being.**

Additionally, the study found that social support among women in Mapalus Rumah contributes to the development of strong solidarity. This solidarity is evident not only in concrete actions but also in the attitudes and values upheld by group members. Women demonstrate high levels of empathy toward one another and show a commitment to maintaining harmonious relationships. In certain situations, this solidarity even motivates individuals to prioritize collective interests over personal ones. This suggests that social support has evolved into a shared value deeply embedded in community life.

Furthermore, social support within Mapalus Rumah functions as a mechanism for strengthening women's capacities. Through intensive interaction, women not only provide direct assistance but also encourage each other to grow and improve. Informants stated that they frequently receive motivation from fellow members to become more active, courageous, and self-confident. In this regard, social support acts as a driving force that enhances individual capabilities in facing both personal and social challenges.

Another important finding is the presence of resource sharing among group members. This form of support does not necessarily involve large material contributions but is often expressed through small, collective acts such as sharing food, labor, or time. In practice, these contributions generate significant impact because they are carried out collaboratively and consistently. Informants indicated that they do not feel burdened when helping others, as they believe such assistance will be reciprocated in different forms when they are in need.

On the other hand, the strong pattern of social support also contributes to the formation of broad and sustainable social networks. Relationships among women in Mapalus Rumah extend beyond small group interactions and expand into wider community networks. This facilitates the exchange of information, opportunities, and access to broader resources. From an empowerment perspective, such networks serve as valuable social capital that can enhance women's roles and capacities within society.

From an empirical standpoint, these findings demonstrate that social support among women in the Mapalus Rumah culture functions not only as a support mechanism but also as a system that strengthens community resilience. When members face pressure or hardship, the presence of this support network becomes a crucial factor in helping them endure and recover. In other words, social support acts as a "social buffer" that maintains the stability of members' lives.

Overall, the pattern of social support among women in Mapalus Rumah reflects relationships that are not merely instrumental but also emotional and normative in nature. The support provided is not driven by formal obligations but by collective awareness and deeply rooted values of togetherness. This highlights the significant potential of local cultural practices in fostering strong social support systems, which can ultimately serve as a vital foundation for sustainable women's empowerment.

3.2. Discussion

The research findings presented in the results section indicate that group cohesiveness, women's participation, and patterns of social support within the Mapalus Rumah culture form an interconnected and mutually reinforcing social system. From a Human Resource Management (HRM) perspective, this condition reflects a value-based approach to managing human resources, emphasizing interpersonal relationships, trust, and solidarity as fundamental elements in enhancing group effectiveness. Unlike formal HRM approaches that typically prioritize structure and procedures, the practices observed in Mapalus Rumah demonstrate that culturally rooted social mechanisms can function as effective and sustainable management systems.

The high level of group cohesiveness identified in this study is consistent with earlier research highlighting cohesiveness as a key factor in improving group performance and organizational effectiveness. Dengah et al (2025) found that highly cohesive groups tend to exhibit stronger commitment to shared goals and higher productivity. This aligns with the Mapalus Rumah context, where women display strong engagement, consistent participation, and a willingness to support one another without formal enforcement. This suggests that culturally embedded cohesiveness can effectively substitute for structural control mechanisms commonly found in modern organizations [22], [23].

Furthermore, this study reinforces previous findings regarding the relationship between local culture and women's empowerment. Mailin et al (2023) argued that local cultures are dynamic and capable of adapting to social changes, including shifts in gender relations. In the case of Mapalus Rumah, culture serves as a space that enables women to actively participate in social life [24]. This is also in line with Wawointana & Rantung (2020), who emphasized that women's empowerment can develop through cultural

approaches that align with, rather than oppose, local values, thereby transforming them into sources of social strength [25].

In terms of social support, the findings correspond with the concept of social capital proposed by Santie et al (2024), which highlights social networks, trust, and shared norms as crucial elements in strengthening social cohesion and enhancing individual well-being [26]. The pattern of social support among women in Mapalus Rumah reflects a strong social network, where members provide both emotional and material assistance. This condition is also supported by Sondakh et al (2024), who noted that positive interpersonal relationships within work groups can enhance motivation, satisfaction, and individual performance [27].

From a gender equality perspective, the findings support Rayhan et al (2025), which asserts that gender equality can be achieved not only through formal policies but also through socially embedded practices [28]. In Mapalus Rumah, gender equality is not codified in formal regulations but is reflected in women's active involvement across various activities. This demonstrates that equality can emerge organically through repeated social interactions supported by inclusive cultural values [29].

When viewed in relation to modern organizational development, these findings are also relevant to Nelwan (2022), who emphasized the role of culture in shaping organizational behavior [30]. Values such as mutual cooperation, togetherness, and solidarity found in the Mapalus Rumah culture can be adapted into management strategies within contemporary organizations. Additionally, Bria et al (2026) highlighted that organizations fostering collaborative and inclusive work environments tend to achieve higher performance compared to those with individualistic orientations [31].

Nevertheless, this study also identifies challenges in sustaining the Mapalus Rumah cultural practices amid modernization. This aligns with Anuar (2026), who argued that organizational culture evolves in response to external environmental changes. Therefore, adaptive efforts are necessary to ensure that cultural values remain relevant without losing their core essence. In this context, integrating local cultural values with modern management principles becomes a crucial strategy for maintaining sustainability [32].

Overall, by linking these findings with previous studies, it can be concluded that cohesiveness within the Mapalus Rumah culture is supported by strong theoretical foundations and significant empirical relevance. These findings not only reinforce prior research but also offer new contributions to the development of culture-based management models, particularly in the context of women's empowerment. The integration of cohesiveness, social support, and women's participation demonstrates that local culture can serve as a strategic resource in building more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable social and organizational systems.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the cohesiveness embedded in the Mapalus Rumah culture functions as an important social foundation for sustainable women's empowerment. Cultural values such as mutual cooperation, solidarity, trust, participation, and collective commitment strengthen women's involvement in community activities while also enhancing social resilience and collaborative capacity. The findings demonstrate that local culture can serve

as an inclusive space that supports women's active roles in social and decision-making processes.

The novelty of this study lies in proposing Mapalus Rumah cohesiveness as a culturally grounded Human Resource Management (HRM) model that integrates local wisdom, women's participation, and collective empowerment into modern organizational practices. These findings provide practical implications for policymakers, community organizations, and HR practitioners in designing empowerment and organizational development programs that emphasize collaboration, inclusiveness, employee engagement, and community-based social support.

However, this study is limited by its focus on a specific socio-cultural community and the relatively small number of participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Future research is recommended to examine similar cultural practices in different regions, apply comparative approaches, or integrate quantitative methods to strengthen the understanding of culturally based women's empowerment and HRM models.

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